

## INTERESTING QUESTIONS

### WOMAN'S POSITION IN CHURCH AND HOME

*QUESTION.* – In view of the fact that St. Paul speaks of no other woman than Rahab (Hebrews 11), when mentioning the Ancient Worthies, how does the woman have an equal chance in the race for the new nature and for the prize of the "high calling"?

*Answer.* – We fail to see any place where the Scriptures discriminate against women. They have the opportunity in this Gospel Age of being joint-heirs with Christ, in which there is no distinction of sex, color or race.

There is nothing in the Scriptures that militates against woman. That the Lord chooses that the mouthpieces of the Church shall be men is his own affair. No one would have a right to question the Lord's will in this matter – whether the Lord would wish men of sixty or young men, or women of a certain age or none at all. God may do what he will with his own. But we do see a reason why he makes a choice. *Woman* is a figure of the Church and *man* is a figure of the Head of the Church. So we are told that woman should not be a teacher in the Church, but man should be the teacher.

And even outside of the Scriptural question, in human affairs, we see no way in which a woman's interests are endangered, because every woman is either a sister of a man or the mother of a man or the daughter of a man. Hence the two sexes are so intimately related that it is unnecessary, for instance, that the whole family should go to the polls to vote, but the family is represented by the man and thus all have share in whatever shall be done in a city or town or country.

If this were otherwise we could imagine a very unsatisfactory condition indeed. It would imply that man had lost one of the very prerogatives which is an element of manhood. On the other hand, it

would imply a dereliction on the part of the woman. The Apostle reminds us of a woman's sphere. And any mother whose *son* does not respect her should keep very quiet. She has that child during all the years of infancy and youth. And if in all those years she does not command respect from that child, she is to blame.

We believe that if women would get the proper focus on this matter there would be an end to woman-suffrage. They would feel that they had a duty at home. There are exceptions to every rule. But Christian parents have said to us, If I had known the Truth sooner, I would have known how to be a better father, a better mother; but I was not taught anything as to the responsibilities upon me as a parent and what was meant by the proper training of a child. One mother said to me, "When my children were very young I was intent upon making money. I was slaving hard with my husband to do this. We have gotten some money, but I lost the opportunity of training my children, and if I would train them differently now I would practically have to kill them." "Yes," we told her, "in view of all the facts, you will have to be considerate of the children and try by example and precept, [R4750 : page 28] rather than by force, to get them into a proper condition." We told her that if she would try to force her opinions upon them she would likely force them into rebellion.

One of her particular points was that she was violently opposed to marriage. We told her that she was likely to drive them to the opposite extreme; that she would better allow them to have beaux, etc., and encourage them to come to her and seek advice, etc. But no, she did not do that. The result was that one daughter married a man who afterward went to prison. Then she wished she had taken a more moderate course, which she has been doing with the others.

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## PROVING ALL THINGS

*Question.* – Will you kindly explain what the Apostle meant by this text: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"? – I Thess. 5:21.

*Answer.* – Proving all things would signify the testing of them. But we could not take the words *all things* in the very broad sense, for this would involve an absurdity. We have not time to test all things in the absolute sense; for instance, we have not time to test all kinds of foods, nor even all kinds of breakfast foods that are advertised. Neither would it be wise to do so. Nor does it refer to all things along other lines we might mention. Evidently such was not the Apostle's intention. What, then, did the Apostle mean? Did he mean to prove everything in the Scriptures? We answer, No; for, at the time he wrote this, the Scriptures were not yet canonized. The different books of the old Scriptures were not then equally acceptable to the Church. We do not know a better guide or standard than the Word of God by which to prove things; but to our understanding the Apostle did not have any of these things specially in mind. It seems to us that he meant, Use your judgment, your reason, in respect to everything.

The Lord does not wish his people to be guided in any sense as a horse with a bit, or as a ship with a rudder. But he appeals to their minds and judgment, not only through the Scriptures, but also through their experiences in life – through his providences. We learn certain lessons respecting God from our daily living, or we *ought* to do so. If we have proved that certain courses of conduct are injurious, we should profit by these experiences. If we have made a mistake, we should profit by the mistake. If we have had some blessing, we should profit by that. We should not be swayed by what some one desires us to do, but we should "count the cost," as Jesus says. We should be guided by reason, seeking to read the will of God through the providences of life, its experiences, and through the Word of God. To our understanding, therefore, the Apostle meant by this statement that

God's people should be reasonable, rational people, and should use their very best judgment as to what they accept or reject.

To give an illustration: Suppose someone had come to those of the early Church, before they had the Bible, before they had the Scriptures, and had said to them, "Your God intends to torture eternally nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of his creatures. This is a revelation from God."

These persons should and would have rejected such teaching as being contrary to all that the Church knew about God.

If anyone tells us something derogatory to the character of another we should reject it and decline to hear unless proved by Scriptural methods. And no time should be wasted on the matter, believing nothing derogatory until it is forced upon us. The Lord's people should not receive what they may hear without proper examination. They should prove what they hear and should use good judgment as to what is supported by the Scriptures. The end for which they should prove what they hear is that they may *hold fast* everything that stands the test applied by the Divine Word and proves to be in accord with the holy Spirit; and whatever will not stand these tests should be promptly rejected by them.

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*Question.* – We have been asked the meaning of the Scripture, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coast of the earth." – Jer. 25:32.

*Answer.* – We understand that the word *coasts* might, in a general way, mean the outward parts. It might be understood literally. Another suggestion is that it might be that portion of society nearest the "sea." And as the "sea" represents the masses that are ready to intrude upon

society, so we suggest that it represents society being encroached upon by that lawless element.

Communication between nations is now a very simple matter in comparison with what it was a few years ago. The Lord has brought the kingdoms together – practically unified them by making them generally dependent upon one another. Whatever affects interests in one quarter affects interests in other quarters. A little while ago the failure of a bank in one place would not have affected a bank at another place. The great inventions now due in the end of the Age are helping in this work of quick communication and enlightenment of the nations.

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*Question.* – Why are faith, hope and love linked together as Christian graces by the Apostle Paul?

*Answer.* – Faith, Hope and Love are very properly linked together as the Christian graces. We suggest that the Apostle had in mind that the Church had faith even before it had partaken of the spirit of love. Subsequently the "work of faith" became a "labor of love" and not *merely* a work of faith. They also had the "patience of hope"; they were not getting their rewards immediately. But they were willing to go on and wait for their reward. The patience of hope was necessary to keep them going, as it will continue to be necessary until the works of faith and labors of love meet their reward in the fulfilment of the Lord's promise. We can surely agree that they are all linked together in every way.

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*Question.* – When do we reach the condition of perfection mentioned in this text: "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." – I Pet. 5:10.

*Answer.* – The construction of the sentence, we think, would naturally lead us to suppose that God would stablish, strengthen, settle his children after they were perfected through suffering. This suffering awhile takes in all of our Christian experiences. It does not mean that we suffer awhile and that then we get to a place where we suffer nothing. The very noblest of Christians have suffered more as they progressed. Thus it was with our Lord. He suffered most of all at the end of his career. So on the whole we are perfected by means of this suffering, as we reach the mark of perfect love in this present life and continue to progress. We think that the suffering takes in all of the present life's experiences. So the thought is, apparently, After ye have suffered awhile (and thus been made perfect), he will "strengthen, stablish, settle you." We all agree that we will not be actually perfect until we attain the resurrection change. [R4750 : page 29]

*Question.* – Why is a *lamb* used to symbolize our Lord?

*Answer.* – In some illustrations our Lord is symbolized by a *lion*, as representing his strong qualities. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah – the Strong One of that tribe. We are not, however, to conclude that the strong qualities of the lion are all the qualities that our Lord possessed. He had the qualities manifested by the lamb – its meekness and unsuspecting and gentleness. In this way the lamb represents our Lord. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep is dumb before her shearers, so he openeth not his mouth." – Isa. 53:7.

*Question.* – Why did John use this expression, "*Behold*, the Lamb of God"? What is the import of the word *behold* in this expression?

*Answer.* – When John made this statement it no doubt produced surprise amongst those who heard. They were unable to appreciate what he meant. He was a prophet – one of the greatest of the prophets, our Lord said – and he was speaking prophetically. Look, see, behold, there standeth the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! Even John did not know in what sense Jesus was the Lamb of God. The Jews offered the typical sacrifice every year; but no Jew had the

least idea what it meant. No Jew understood, for "had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

We read in the Scriptures that, after John had made this declaration respecting Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God," two of his disciples sought Jesus and inquired where he lived, and afterward became his disciples. They had been with John because he was a reformer. But when John declared that there was one among them greater than he, the latchet of whose shoe he was not worthy to unloose, they wondered who was this Great One. So they kept on the lookout. Then they began to discern in some sense of the word that this gentle One, this unapproved One, this uncombative One was he who should take away the sins of the people. There was merely John's word for it, but they believed him to be a prophet of the Lord and as soon as they had this intimation, that Jesus was the Lamb of God, that he was greater than John himself, they left John and became the disciples of Jesus. Others did not appreciate these things so much and remained with John, perhaps becoming the disciples of Jesus after John was dead.

We might consider John's words as an allusion to the Passover Lamb, if this had been at the Passover season of the year, at the time of the killing of the lamb; but it was at the opposite end of the year – at the time of our Lord's birthday, in October. The evidences are clear that our Lord's ministry was three and a half years long and that he was crucified at the Passover time, and it was when he was just thirty years old that he offered himself at Jordan.

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[R4751 : page 29]

### "HEIRS OF GOD"

*Question.* – What is meant by the phrase, "Heirs of God"?

*Answer.* – This use of the word heirs is not the ordinary or common one. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in the sense that God has a great gift to bestow. He does not bestow *this* gift by testament; whereas most property is given by testament or will, the death of the testator being necessary in order that the gift may be received.

In life insurance there are different kinds of policies – life policies and endowment policies. So, in this case, God has in his possession to give away the divine nature and the honors of the Kingdom. First he promised that he would bestow them upon his Son as a gift, if he would show certain obedience. On account of this obedience God hath highly exalted him. And so, according to promise also, when we become obedient unto death we become sharers in this promise.

In the other case, where the death of the testator is spoken of, Jesus has human life, restitution, to give. He was not in a position to give this when he was a man. As long as he was a man he needed this life himself. But, in obedience to the Father's will, he laid his human life down. He did so as a bequest, as a testator of this estate that he had at his disposal. These rights of eternal life were, of course, his by right and he has never forfeited nor exchanged them, but maintained them. He stated that he had authority to lay down his life and authority to take it up again.

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